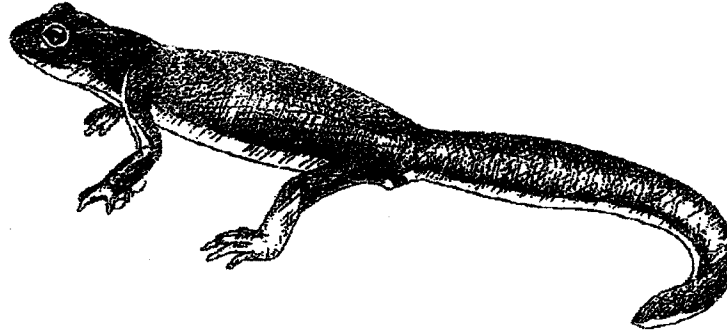


Roughskin Newt

Taricha granulosa
Family Salamandridae

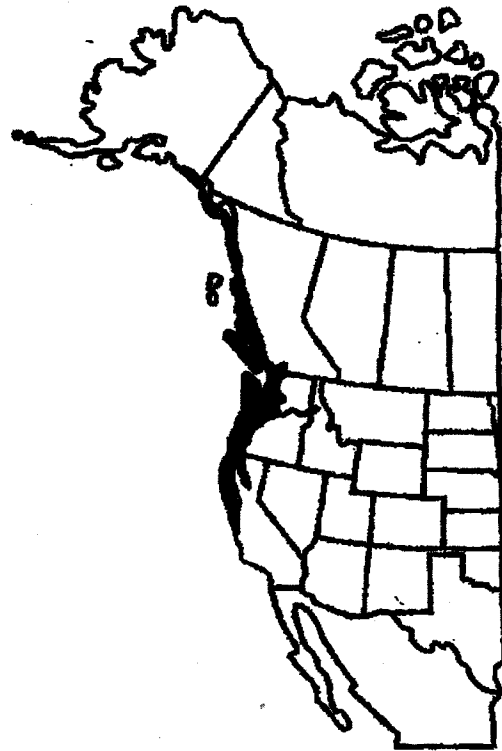


Global Rank: G5

State Rank: S2 (AK); S5 (CA, OR, WA);
SE (ID); SE1 (MT)

Distribution: Found from the coastal mountains and lowlands of southeast Alaska south to Santa Cruz County, California. Also found in the Cascade Mountains of Washington, Oregon, and northern California. It is known from a number of ponds in the Moscow, Idaho, area, where it was probably introduced. It is also commonly called the roughskinned newt.

Description: Adults reach up to 7.9 in. (20 cm.) in total length. Key characteristics are rough skin, usually brown dorsal coloration and yellowish-orange ventral coloration. Some populations have dark blotches or are all dark on ventral surface. Breeding males (pictured) develop smooth skin, brown to olive coloration above and a broad dusky patch on each side, a bulbous vent, flattened tail, and dark skin on underside of feet. In some parts of its range, the roughskin newt curls the tip of its tail in a defensive pose. Larvae reach up to 3 in. (7.5 cm.) in total length. Key characteristics are greenish-yellow dorsal surface with light



Current range of the roughskin newt

spots along sides and pink or orange ventral surface. Eyes appear along outer margin of head when viewed from above.

1997. Atlas of Oregon wildlife. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, OR.

Reproduction: Roughskin newts breed from December to July, beginning earlier at the lower elevations. It differs from other western newts in laying eggs singly. Up to 30 eggs are laid and attached to vegetation or other objects. Eggs hatch in 20-26 days and metamorphose before winter. Sexual maturity is reached at 3-4 years of age.

Food: Adult roughskin newts eat earthworms, slugs, snails, and insect larvae, as well as amphibian eggs and tadpoles. Larvae feed on zooplankton and small aquatic invertebrates.

Habits: The newt occurs in a wide variety of habitats, from grasslands to conifers and mixed forests. It requires ponds, reservoirs, lakes, or slowly flowing streams for breeding and is usually found near a source of water. It hides under rocks, bark, or logs, but is often seen moving about in the daylight. It can migrate considerable distances to breeding ponds and can be very abundant in appropriate habitat. The main predator seems to be common garter snakes. The average life span is 12 years, but individuals may live up to 26 years.

Management Implications: The roughskin newt has poisonous skin secretions which repel most predators. The toxin (tetrodotoxin) can be fatal to humans and is chemically identical to the toxin found in puffer fish (such as the fugu fish of Japan) which has been responsible for many human deaths.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, N.Y.; Csuti, B., A.J. Kimerling, T.A. O'Neil, M.M. Shaughnessy, E.P. Gaines, and M.M.P. Huso.